



High Speed Rail Advances Everywhere Except in the United States

By Alexander Lew February 21, 2008 | 8:00:00 AM Categories: [Mass Transit](#)

Barcelona said "Benvigut" earlier this week to a new high speed rail service that will connect the Catalan region with Madrid in 2 hours and 38 minutes, cutting almost four hours off the local train times. [The new AVE](#) (which means bird in Spanish, but is the abbreviation for Alta Velocidad, high speed) will offer 17 daily trains in each direction. During the first day of ticket sales, Renfe, the national railway of Spain, [sold 28,418 tickets on the web](#). The original Barcelona-Madrid AVE line was supposed to open in 2004. This train line will provide a vital connection between two of Spain's biggest cities.

Late last year, Morocco announced that a [high speed rail link between Casablanca and Tangier](#) will be built with Alstom, the same company that manufactures the TGV. The line will be finished in 2013. An additional connection is considered to Marrakech and Agadir. The whole 1500-km system will cost €9 billion in total.

[Argentina is also working with Alstom](#) to build a high speed rail route, which will run between Buenos Aires and Cordoba. The whole 710-km line will cost a surprisingly low, \$1.35 billion US.

And not to forget, the Eurostar shaved off 20 minutes off its travel time, connecting London and Paris in 2 hours and 15 minutes.

So, what does the United States have planned in terms of high speed rail? The [Acela Express](#) hasn't shown much time improvement off the local trains. California is planning a [Los Angeles to San Francisco bullet train](#), but so far, no funding is set in stone. The state will, however, decide this November if America's first true high speed rail line will be built or not.